

Northwestern Michigan College

HLC ID 1355

OPEN PATHWAY: Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

Review Date: 10/20/2022

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

10/20/2022

Review Type:

Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

Scope of Review

- Assurance Review

There are no forms assigned.

Institutional Context

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC), a publicly funded, two-year, rural college, is located in the Grand Traverse region of northwest lower Michigan. The primary service area includes six counties in the region: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse (taxing district), Kalkaska, Leelanau and Wexford. With the proximity to Lake Michigan, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and Grand Traverse Bay, as well as many inland lakes, the Grand Traverse Region is a major tourist destination. NMC is located in Grand Traverse County, whose county seat, Traverse City, is well known as the “cherry capital of the world.” Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) was founded in 1951 as the first community college in Michigan. NMC provides educational, economic and cultural support for the Grand Traverse region and surrounding communities.

In 2019 the Board of Trustees selected the 11th President of Northwestern Michigan College with the approval of a 2-year contract. The President started his position at the college Jan. 1, 2020. The President led the college in a comprehensive review of the strategic plan. The NMC 2022-25 Strategic Plan includes strategies focused on education, support for student success and a college-wide commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Most programming occurs at the Main, Great Lakes, and Aero Park Campuses. Select programs are offered partially or exclusively online. Additional facilities include the University Center and Rogers Observatory.

NMC serves over 50,000 students annually through more than 60 areas of academic study and other non-credit courses through Extended Education, organizational and customized training for businesses, and other community learning opportunities. Five partner universities grant advanced degrees through NMC’s University Center. Fall 2022 academic enrollment is over 3,000 students. Thirty-five percent are enrolled full-time, 54% are women, and 78% identify as White. The average age for credit-students is 24 years. NMC has four functional areas each led by a vice president: Educational Services, Strategic Initiatives, Finance and Administration, and Student Services and Technologies. Fiscal Year 2022 data show NMC has over 650 employees (12% full-time faculty, 35% adjunct faculty, 31% full-time staff and 22% part-time staff).

Previously the College was in the AQIP Accreditation Pathway submitting their Systems Appraisal in 2018 with a Quality Review and Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2019. HLC-IAC concurred with the evaluation findings and voted to affirm the institution's eligibility to select Standard or Open Pathway for reaffirmation of accreditation. NMC chose the Open Pathway. This is the first Assurance Review within the new accreditation pathway for the

institution.

Interactions with Constituencies

Adhering to requirements for Open Pathway Assurance Review Year Four, the team interacted with the institution's ALO only. Information and team introduction were also sent to the president of the college.

Additional Documents

Northern Michigan College Document Requests- HLC Assurance Review 2022

- Strategic Plan- Strategic Action Documents: NMC Action Plan; Strategic Planning Committee; Strategic Plan- public website; KPI Metrics Dashboards
 - *Strategy 1; PLC; Online; Course documents
 - *Strategy 2; Persistence; Enrollment; Success; Success2 documents
 - *Strategy 3; Retention; Access
 - *Strategy 4; Transfer
 - *Strategy 5; Culinary
 - *.pdf versions (dashboards not accessible without NMC VPN)
- Examples of area workers and employers. EES
- Examples of non-credit professional training opportunities
- Tutoring Services data source
- 2021-2022 enrollment report (IPEDS 12-month enrollment)
- Fall 2021 transfer report-
 - *Transfer Metrics Dashboard
 - *NSC Transfer Dashboard
 - *.pdf versions (dashboards not accessible without NMC VPN)
- Map and flow chart of college structure. Decision processes. Process Flow; Planning Involvement; NMC Organizational Chart; Governance: NMC Councils, Committees and Teams
- Website dashboard Strategic Plan- public website
- Board policy or legislative regulation- Bylaws; Responsibilities; Governing Style; All Board policies link
- Student, community stakeholder feedback session - Focus Group Summary Report
- International Affairs Forum- Website
- Alumni program communication; Communication examples
- Minutes or agenda of retiree (alumni) advisory group-Communication examples; Program Advisory Groups; Maritime Minutes example; Advisory Committee Survey Results dashboard
- Source of international student population research- Strategic Plan 2014 (Target #12) ; The 5% goal was included in a previous Strategic Plan(SP) but was not achieved. HS students from China (Weiming) ended but efforts continue with other initiatives, such as the Summer Aviation program and Yellow River Conservancy Technical Institute continue.
- Plan to bring students from China - The partnership with Weiming, China HS students and TCAPS (local HS) ended due to rule changes regarding F1 visas. The College continues to work internationally as evidenced by the Yellow River Conservancy Technical Institute RCTI Agreement; YRCTI Contract 2016
- Syllabus with faculty-developed outcomes for the Human dimension - Syllabus Example SCO211; SOC101; MTH241 (pg. 11)

- Indigenous People's Day flier or event communication- Student News; Employee email
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians grant program document
- Internal Survey, community listening session, or external stakeholders feedback Focus Group Summary Report
- Research for minority student population percentage and regional demographic- EMSI, Inc; Demographic Dashboard- KPI 3
- Hiring and training of staff to reflect and support minority student populations . - Diversity in Hiring Training Example (#19); 21 Day Equity Challenge ; Day 1 and Day 2 Examples; (faculty, staff and student participation)
- 2021 NCCBP Report
- Evidence of the process of reviewing the mission, vision, and value statements that were recently approved. 11/2022 BoT Agenda and Minutes, Steering Committee approval
- 2016-2017 Title IX notice: Immediate action/corrective action taken by college to address incidents (professional development, Title IX Officer/trained investigators, etc.) - 2016-17 Report
- Additional evidence of fines from Title IX or loss of revenue from reduction in housing - *No fines or loss of revenue*. Title IX 2020-21
- Bachelor's degrees and partner universities. IRB evidence and evidence regarding the development and connection of the strategic plan – how feedback is incorporated – minutes from a meeting/discussion of process? Examples of Connections/agreements with other colleges. Articulation Agreements, Strategy #4 Objective lead meetings - April, August. *Updates provided to UC partners during monthly meetings. Agenda item on Sept 15 mtg.*
- Example of financial audit during the period of review as evidence. Audit Reports
- Institutional Research Board or more information regarding what is later referred to as Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) gathers and monitors research requests in order to ensure the rights, privacy, dignity and welfare of human subjects, involved in studies conducted on or by NMC students or employees-Human Research Application (website), Human Research Policy
- New Faculty and Staff Institute evidence document *New Employee Orientation: Day One Faculty & Staff; Day 2 is for Faculty/adjuncts only*; Faculty Knowledgebase; Teaching Practices
- Employee training site; Talent Portal
- Extended Education Services (EES) policy/guidelines summary
- Student training regarding policies- All students must complete Title IX training (sample email)(sample presentation); Student employees have additional training based on their role (sample presentation). Policies on the public website (ex. Student Rights and Responsibilities) and Student Handbook.
- Overall support evidence for research, economic development. - MI New Jobs Training Program example
- Evidence for co-curricular activities that have articulated learning outcomes/assessments – examples of rubrics/types of assessment that are listed, Newsletter sample
- Assessment/regular review of Global Endorsement Capstone Guidelines ; Capstone Presentation
- Student Government Association presentation of an annual report - Presentation to the Board 5/23/2022
- Community constituent interest evidence a meeting agenda/minutes. Advisory board minutes. GLMA Board of Visitors Minutes example.
- State regulation showing governing board's independence from undue influence-Conflict of Interest Policy
- Curriculum Committee agenda or meeting minutes- Example
- Faculty Council agenda or meeting minutes - Example
- ORPE webpage - Intranet ; Public
- Plans / ideas / evidence to further develop in the area of diversity. - Strategy 3 Retention; Access
- Evidence of assessment being done of non-classroom faculty role Departments : Research, Planning & Effectiveness : Northwestern Michigan Colleges and service. Faculty Contract Article 24ANorthwestern Michigan College -and- NMC Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Faculty required to attend conferences is enforced and tracked. Faculty Contract Article 24A

- Faculty hiring criteria or qualifications.
- Evidence criteria is used and how these are associated with positions- Automotive Example- Criteria/Qualifications
- Review process for budgetary decisions- Budget Development Considerations
- Access the Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness dashboard? Report Server (multiple dashboards)
- Application for credit forms as examples. Oversight for this process. The Registrar works with academic areas and the Curriculum Committee when determining course equivalencies.
- Evidence Dual credit courses are comparable to courses taught on the campus. Dual Credit and courses taught on campus use the same course syllabi. Example, MTH 251 is taught by the same instructor at the high school and on-campus (schedule; syllabus).
- Evidence process for program development is collaborative including the curriculum committee. Minutes of meetings etc.? GLCI Certificate Proposal (Curriculum Committee Minutes); GLCI Report (includes stakeholder input).
- Evidence in review process of academic rigor is met- Teaching and Learning, Annual Program Review Process
- Examples: Faculty appraisal with TER-N analysis; Faculty appraisal with rubric analysis. All faculty are requirement to include the goal: "Helping Students Learn - General Education Outcomes
- Assessment committee/team minutes.
- Information flow between committees- Leadership Council (sample minutes)
- General education requirements- General Education Outcomes GE requirements vary by degree. Outcomes are the closest with respect to uniform standards.
- Newly developed co-curricular committee, evidence about how it works, or if it is involved in assessment. Specific examples of assessment taking place. ELI Newsletter (pg. 2); (sample meeting minutes; sample newsletter)
- Evidence to support action on assessment results. Qualifications or responsibilities of the assessment coordinator, link provided goes to a page about the assessment team charge.
- Minutes from meetings/agendas to show the inclusive nature of the development of the strategic plan. Stakeholders involved, role of feedback. Should really be part of criterion 5 evidence. NMC Constituent MVV Feedback example; Focus Group Summary Report
- Faculty program curriculum proposal GLCI Certificate Proposal (Curriculum Committee Minutes)
- Policy Council webpage, agenda, or minutes
- Planning and Budgeting Council webpage, agenda, or minutes
- New Hire Checklist
- New Employee Orientation program agenda
- Learning Plan
- Professional Development Institute
- Center for Instructional Excellence webpage
- Institutional Effectiveness Criteria
- Technology Plant Fund supported by student technology fee -
- Annual request sample/form (sample Plant Fund Request Form; New/Replacement Hire Form; Budgeting Manual)
- Facilities Assessment (Section II, Appendix B, pg. 40)
- Master Plan (Section II, Appendix B, pg. 40)
- Strategic Fund- PBC (pg. 25)
- Fund for Transformation- PBC (pg. 24)
- Summer Flight Experience
- National Park Service and Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore coastal assessment project- Findings; Cooperative Agreement
- Differential tuition in high-cost occupational programs - Tuition and Fees Schedules by Tier

- NMC Foundation
- External constituent groups perspectives- Focus Group Summary Report
- Cost to Educate model - Financial Services dashboard
- Sample of Offering in each Portfolio- A, B and C
- Resource development planning-NMC Foundation Strategic Plan (to be completed 12/2022); HBA agreement sample
- Assessment Team meeting minutes/agenda
- ESIMT meeting minutes/agenda
- TER-N - GenEd with TER-N dashboard
 - Communication
 - Quantitative Reasoning
 - Critical Thinking
 - Critical Thinking (TER-N)
- My Success/My Academic Plan example/template - *These consist of model schedules. Students use MAP to track their progress according to the model schedule.*
- Student feedback
 - Learner Engagement
 - Level 1-Quality of Course & Instruction; Trends
 - Quality of Program

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The mission, vision and value statements were reviewed in 2021 as part of a strategic planning process and approved by the Board of Trustees at the November 2021 meeting. The mission, vision, and value statements are developed through participation of executive leadership, faculty, staff, governance councils, the Board of Trustees, the community, and external stakeholders and approved by the Board of Trustees. The 2022-25 Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Trustees at the January 2022 meeting.

The College reviews the mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria as part of the strategic planning process. Information is gathered from students, employees, faculty, the community and other stakeholders during this review process. The College recently initiated a strategic planning process using Campus Works as consultants. The process with the consultants included evaluating the mission, vision and value statements. *Inclusion* was added to the strategic plan. The new value statements adopted in 2021 focus on learning, integrity, collaboration, respect, inclusion, innovation, stewardship and excellence.

The six-county service area for NMC includes Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford counties in Michigan serving over 50,000 students annually. The combined service area is approximately 5,700 square miles, or six percent of Michigan. The student demographic reflects

the demographics of the six-county service area. The average age of the NMC student population has increased due to the decrease in the proportion of high school aged students. The College prioritizes online enrollment for students in need of flexible scheduling. A goal outlined in the Strategic Plan is to increase the proportion of online courses by over five percent. The College also offers a variety of non-credit professional training opportunities for area workers and employers. Extended Education Services (EES) added several international and national course topics such as a non-credit Global Certificate Program, Diversity Equity Inclusion 101, Intercultural Fluency, and Inequity and the Price We Pay courses.

The Innovation Center project is a funded investment for renovation and modernization. In 2019, NMC won state legislative approval of \$7.4 million in capital outlay dollars to cover approximately one-half of its \$14.4 million cost. The facility houses the NMC Library, the NMC Varsity Esports Program, the Experiential Learning Institute, Educational Technology Offices, the WNMC college radio station and the Hawk Owl Cafe. NMC offers 104 majors in occupational fields, including health sciences, computer information technology, and construction technology. The College also sponsors the International Affairs Forum, TEDx Conferences, and other community learning opportunities.

The Student Success Center(SSC) provides students with personalized academic support services. The Center has identified learning gaps due to the increase in online offerings during the pandemic and as result, is including strategic action steps to collaborate with faculty to identify students in need of help earlier.

NMC publicly articulates its mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria on its website. The print version of the Strategic Plan was distributed to faculty, staff, board of trustees, and other key stakeholders. The mission is articulated in the academic catalog. Student resident handbooks include the mission, vision, and value statements that were developed by the strategic planning committee.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NMC is a public, nonprofit college that provides an education to students across the nation, state and six-county service area. NMC offers credentials in a general education curriculum and occupational fields. NMC does not generate profits for external stakeholders and is accountable to the community it serves. NMC awarded its first bachelor's degrees in January 2014: Bachelor of Science in Maritime Technology. This change was a direct result of feedback from stakeholders and a change in State of Michigan law.

The education focused mission, "*We promote lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities*" asserts lifelong learning is NMC's primary purpose.

The College reviews the mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria as part of the strategic planning process. NMC engages the community through the elected Board of Trustees, gathers feedback from the community on surveys, and community participation on the Foundation Board and Advisory Boards. Feedback from these community solicitations and participation assists understanding and gauging community interest in programs and services. The foundation office maintains relationships with alumni through digital communications as well as an alumni and retiree advisory group. Surveys and informal focus groups inform programs and events hosted by the college.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NMC has partnerships with secondary schools and career technical centers. The College's Midwest location and regional demographics requires strategies to increase the diversity of global and cultural experiences of learners. Plans are focused to develop partnerships and programs bringing international students, faculty, and experiences to campus and expanding opportunities for students and faculty abroad. The Agreement on Joint Education Institute between Yellow River Conservancy, Technical Institute in China and Northwestern Michigan College is an example of expanding international participation and experiences. The International Services and Service-Learning Office works closely with faculty to provide training, support, and resources in building global components into courses and programs. Faculty syllabi of courses in Communications, Humanities, and Social Science meet cultural perspectives and diversity requirements.

The College annually celebrates Indigenous Peoples' Day in October. For the last four years, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa has provided grant dollars to fund strategies for improving the success rates of NMC's Native American students. The College demonstrates inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations through internal surveys, community listening sessions and feedback from external stakeholders.

The minority student population at NMC is approximately 12%, the regional minority demographic (7%). In the summer of 2020, the College initiated a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee to focus on diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives. NMC recognizes a need to increase the diversity of faculty and staff. NMC's minority employee/population ratio is in the 52nd percentile among peers according to the 2021 NCCBP Report. The College is working to prioritize diversity among faculty and staff and student population by including a strategy in the 2022-25 Strategic Plan relating to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College has a clear mission that is articulated publicly and guides institutional operations. The College employed a consultant (Campus Works) and solicited feedback from external and internal constituents across their six-county service area during the process of reviewing the mission, vision and values. The process with the consultants included evaluating the Mission, Vision and Value statements. *Inclusion* was added to the strategic plan.

NMC publicly articulates its mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria on its website. The print version of the Strategic Plan was widely distributed to faculty, staff, board of trustees, and other key stakeholders. The mission is articulated in the academic catalog. Student resident handbooks include the mission, vision, and value statements that were developed by the strategic planning committee.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As outlined and evidenced in Criterion One, Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) reviewed their mission, vision, and value statements in 2021 as part of a strategic planning process. The statements were approved by the Board of Trustees at the November 2021 meeting. The mission, vision, and value statements were developed through participation of executive leadership, faculty, staff, governance councils, the Board of Trustees, the community, and external stakeholders and approved by the Board of Trustees. The 2022-25 Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Trustees at the January 2022 meeting, which constituted formal recognition of the stated mission. As part of the development of a new strategic plan, the board reaffirmed this mission statement as part of their approval of this plan. The formal meeting minutes given in evidence for Criterion One document this vote.

The College has provided multiple examples of policies and resources to guide the ethical behavior of institutional stakeholders, and to create processes for handling situations where there is concern. The governing board, which approves all general policies, is subject to the Policy Governance Model as well as multiple policies that are in line with the Michigan Community College Act and Michigan Public Conflict of Interest law as evidenced in the supporting documents. Examples include the policies regarding conflict of interest and intellectual property rights. For students, faculty, staff, and administration, there are multiple policies that apply to their behavior, which can be found in the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics, Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy.

NMC asks employees to go through various ethics trainings and onboarding trainings, such as FERPA training, Title IX, Sexual Harassment, and Alcohol and Drug policies. Students are provided links to policies and the code of conduct in every syllabus and Moodle course shell. NMC has policies and procedures in place to investigate and move to resolution including those of a Title IX nature as indicated in Annual TIX Report 16-17. The report indicates investigations follow

current best practices, including the required Title IX training as well as Campus SAVE Act Training. Students receive training through the student intranet and faculty/employees through Human Resources.

The College has several processes and systems in place to ensure policies on ethical behavior are followed. There are external financial audits conducted annually and are posted on the college website with the reports from 2015 to 2021 available. The latest report indicated the NMC Foundation was clear in its reporting and as of July 1, 2021, the Foundation adopted Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) Accounting Standards Update to provide clearer financial information about noncash contributions. Training regarding purchasing and budget are available on the College's intranet and are in the Budgeting Manual. The Business Office manages potential fiscal conflicts of interest using the NMC conflict of interest policy. The College's Extended Education Services (EES) manages potential conflicts of interest in community enrichment courses. The EES is charged with monitoring these courses both through staff attending classes and through participant feedback to ensure instructors are adhering to guidelines. The Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) gathers and monitors research requests in order to ensure the rights, privacy, dignity and welfare of human subjects, involved in studies conducted on or by NMC students or employees. The ORPE intranet site for NMC contains information regarding accreditation, survey reports, and a Human Participant Research Application. The processes for surveys and reporting are also housed in the site.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan Community College (NMC) uses its website and online catalog as the primary means of communicating information about academic offerings and requirements, costs, faculty and staff, federal requirements, and accreditation relationships. Academic offerings are clearly presented on individual webpages as well as through the online catalog. The Admissions and Financial Services website includes information regarding tuition and fees. The site also has online tools for students to estimate the overall costs and financial aid eligibility. Directory information for faculty and staff is published online, as well as regional and specialized accreditation relationships. Governance structure is provided online through the NMC Councils, Committees, & Teams page. Recently the College's Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness also began providing interactive data visualization dashboards to aid in public information.

NMC's 2022-25 Strategic Plan includes a goal for every credential seeking student to engage in at least one experiential learning opportunity (ELO) at the College, with the stated target date of implantation by 2024. This builds on the prior work in and action plan of the College in 2017. This 2017 project led to the Experiential Learning Institute (ELI) which is led by two faculty co-directors. The website for the NMC ELI provides links to regular newsletters, opportunities for lunch and learns, as well as student reflections. In addition, a variety of faculty and staff resources are available on the ELI intranet page. NMC also promotes co-curricular activities as part of the student learning process and further development of the activities are part of the strategic plan. This work includes evidence cited in Criterion 4, of a Co-curricular Committee (CCC) as part of the ELI that has been formed to aid in co-curricular activities in terms of offerings and assessment. These include financial literacy modules through the Financial Services website, Library Resources and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the two-year college honor society. The PTK chapter is active and has been recognized in the PTK journal Civic Scholar. Aligning with the NMC mission and vision, the College offers a NMC Global Endorsement with rubrics and examples of expectations available online. To obtain the endorsement, students accumulate a minimum of one hundred points earned through academic and experiential learning, activities, and event participation, and prepare a final capstone presentation. Review and assessment of the program would be a welcomed inclusion for later reviews.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) has a shared governance model outlined in the Board of Trustees & Staff Policies that follow the state policies and regulations set forth in the Michigan Community College Act of 1966. The roles and expectations of various stakeholders at the College are outlined in the policy. Currently there are seven members of the Board. While policies are posted online through the NMC Board of Trustees and Staff Policies website, evidence of training of Board members regarding expectations as well as in policies would be of benefit for NMC in future assurance arguments. In addition, NMC would benefit from a definition of shared governance created by Faculty, Staff, Student leadership and Administrative leadership. This definition would then be a guide to gathering feedback on college issues or needs, deciding as to how to address those needs, sharing that decision and why it was selected, and implementing a plan.

The Board has policies that articulate its responsibilities, role in governance, and accountability/conflict of interest requirements. It is noted in the Board of Trustees Responsibility Policy that the primary responsibility of the board is to represent the public in determining and demanding appropriate organizational performance. The Assurance Argument and accompanying evidence confirm there are policies and processes in place regarding the delegation of responsibilities by the Board as well as Board Bylaws providing guidance regarding items such as Board of Trustees Governing Style, Responsibilities, and Delegation to the President. The NMC Board of Trustees and Staff Policies are publicly available online through the website. The agendas and minutes are also posted on the site. For example, the minutes from October 24, 2022, support the role of the Board in reviewing audit results, budgetary issues, and updating policies.

In the NMC shared governance structure, the Board of Trustees oversees the President. As outlined

in the Board of Trustees & Staff Policies: Governance, there are four councils that then report to the President, which are: Planning/Budgeting Council, Policy Council, President's Council, and Leadership Council. All Board meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act and follow the policies set forth by the College. Current Board members, agendas, and meeting minutes for Board meetings are posted publicly on their website, and there is an opportunity for public comment at each Board meeting.

Faculty oversee academic matters through the Curriculum Committee, a subcommittee of Faculty Council, which is responsible for recommending, monitoring, and reviewing the academic curriculum including adoption of programs; adoption, modification, and deletion of courses; revision of degree requirements; curriculum standard or related issues. Faculty meeting minutes are posted on the Faculty Council intranet site and indicate active involvement in concerns of governance at the College, curriculum, and highlighting faculty work.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College NEO's documents academic freedom in the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics. Section 1 of the document states: "Faculty members accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge, as well as practicing intellectual honesty. Although subsidiary interests are followed, these interests must never hamper or compromise the faculty member's freedom of inquiry." Section 5 of the same document states: "As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, faculty members have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom. " The role of academic freedom and College expectations on campus is further addressed in Article XXIV of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Students' rights and responsibilities are outlined in Staff Policy D-602.00. The College also outlines policies and processes available to students in Staff Policy D-602.01 which includes institutional procedures regarding code of conduct inquiries. The College also indicates that it continues to develop processes to best record, monitor, and track issues including academic misconduct and student concerns.

Additional college policies address rights researchers, research participants, staff, and faculty. Evidence provided includes Human Subject Research Policy, Intellectual Property Rights Policy and Board Policy D-700.01 Institutional Effectiveness Criterion: Culture Political Activities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As noted in the Assurance Argument, Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is not a research institution. In line with the mission and vision of the College it has developed policies and procedures to help ensure that students, faculty, and staff engage in responsible academic practices. The College also provides resources and guidelines to promote inquiry and academic freedom in research.

Students have access to a range of guidance concerning research ethics and use of information. NCM's oversight of ethical research is supported by coursework in freshman composition, work with the library in instruction, and the Writing & Reading Center providing additional guidance. The composition curriculum used in all sections of freshman composition provides information about plagiarism and use of resources. The library website provides links for citations and well as videos on conducting research. The Writing & Reading Center website indicates assistance with source integration, citation/documentation and reading comprehension of sources used.

Support for research compliance is via the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) outlined in the Staff Policy D-506.08 Institutional Effectiveness Criterion: Operations Human Subject Research. The policy outlines that the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness, in accordance with federal regulations, is to ensure the rights, privacy, dignity and welfare of human subjects involved in studies conducted on or by NMC students or employees.

The institution has processes in place to ensure academic integrity. The Student Code of Conduct and Faculty Code of Professional Ethics outline processes for faculty, staff, and students if academic misconduct is suspected. The Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy is available in the College catalog, student handbook, and website. A link is also provided in every syllabus and Moodle course shell. The policy outlines expectations as well as procedures that include matters of academic integrity. In addition, the College works to track incidents and concerns of both students and faculty. This includes reporting/tracking software, reporting processes, and analysis of

conduct/response.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College has taken multiple steps, and enacted multiple policies and processes, to ensure the institution and its stakeholders conduct themselves and in an ethical and responsible manner. The Board has a variety of policies that cover pertinent topics, including the ethics behind conflict of interest and acting in good faith. Employees and students also receive training regarding conduct and college expectations.

The institution clearly and articulates itself to its stakeholders through its public website, updating information regularly and with transparency.

In future assurance arguments evidence of Board members training regarding policies would be helpful. Board minutes provide evidence the body is focusing on activities relevant for its role and have delegated appropriate responsibilities to the President and the President's leadership team.

NMC has documented a commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression in policy. In instances where this may not be followed or upheld, there are grievance policies and processes in place for both faculty and students.

Although not a research institution, the College the has incorporated research methodology and resources in the Office of Research, Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) which gathers and monitors research requests in order to ensure the rights, privacy, dignity and welfare of human subjects, involved in studies conducted on or by NMC students or employees.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College's development of the curriculum, specific certificate and degree requirements follow sound guidelines established by the college and in accordance with policy. The academic departments explain via the course syllabi and course outlines the course objectives. New programs, program revisions, and new courses are approved by the Curriculum Committee and reviewed by the lead faculty. In addition, the College uses a common learning experience to enhance students' personal goals. Good evidence was presented to demonstrate the college using feedback from constituents and then adjusting as needed.

The College has clearly stated degree requirements, program, and course-level outcomes. Program-level outcomes are stated on the college website. The course syllabi share the course outcomes for all courses. Curriculum maps are available on college program websites, showing the linkage of courses to program learning outcomes.

The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and locations. Examples include face-to-face, online, and hybrid classes, and include other locations. When NMC assesses the general education outcomes, student work is requested similarly from each variable to ensure consistency.

Program rigor is assured through annual reviews and course assessments. This program review utilizes outcome results focusing on skill attainment (licensure and certification), transfer or placement, and course- and program-level satisfaction. Data is analyzed using external and internal benchmarks. In addition, the college has worked with Campus Works to hold several focus group

meetings and gain insights to the perceptions of others regarding their mission and performance.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NMC's mission is to deliver lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities. To fulfill this mission, the College offers a wide range of associate degrees, certificates, and transfer education in liberal arts and sciences, and in occupational studies. The College also offers a limited number of baccalaureate programs. NMC is part of the Michigan Transfer Agreement which provides transferability of core courses among Michigan public and private colleges and universities.

NMC's General Education Outcomes (GEOs) of Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Reasoning, support its mission, purposes, and philosophy of general education which is *to promote the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively in a changing world.*

NMC adopted General Education Outcomes(GEOs) in all credit course. These outcomes include various categories modeled the work of L. Dee Fink. Categories include Knowledge, Application, Integration, Learning to Learn, Caring-Civic Learning, and Human Dimension.

In 2014 NMC created the Learning Outcomes Action Project Team which become a standing college committee, the Assessment Team. This group's mission serves to strengthen the integration and alignment of the GEOs and outcomes into the curriculum, develop a comprehensive assessment plan, develop action plans for continuous improvement, and identify professional development to support the effectiveness of learning outcomes and the assessment process.

The College's Curriculum Committee is charged with reviewing degree requirements every five years and GEOs every two years with input from the College community. If outcome changes are suggested the draft is sent to Policy Council for review. CC and Policy Council hold a public hearing to gather input and make refinements as needed. The suggested outcomes are then forwarded to the VP for Educational Services and then to the President for final approval.

NMC has a goal of helping students engage as educated and informed citizens in a diverse society. To help support this goal, NMC added a cultural perspective and diversity course requirement as part of most programs. The College also offers a variety of curricular and co-curricular experiences that lead to a Global Endorsement on the student transcript. Training and support for these experiences are provided by the International Services and Service-Learning Offices.

The discovery of knowledge takes place on the NMC campus by engagement in case studies, simulations, research projects, and the development and presentation of portfolios. Students demonstrate critical thinking, effective communication, creative work consistent with the College's general education outcomes. The Experiential Learning Institute assists in these efforts to engage students and promote learning.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Rating

Met

Rationale

NMC acknowledges that the composition of its faculty and staff falls short of the diversity of the population they serve. The existing Strategic Plan mentions diversity, equity, and inclusion. This component was new to the College plan, so they are still in the initial phase of implementing and being able to share much evidence, but some good work has been done. Faculty training on inclusion and working with minorities has been done and will continue. Information regarding the hiring process was shared, but there was no mention of efforts to increase the diversity of the applicant pool or actions taken to address this shortfall. Hopefully, this is being done and just not shared. Given this is a new focus for the College, some time is needed to allow them to make advances. Future teams should focus on this area to review progress.

NMC has a robust process to help ensure sufficient numbers of faculty to serve students. The team watches enrollment trends and uses data to ensure room efficiency and appropriate faculty levels. The current student-to-faculty ratio of 14:1 is consistent with the college's philosophy and mission. The faculty load is governed by the Collective Bargaining Agreement and is also consistent with the industry standard within the state of Michigan. This agreement also governs the non-classroom roles of faculty.

Adjustments to the curriculum and student learning outcomes are made in the fall after gaining

approval through the college process.

NMC has committed to assessing all General Education Objectives. Faculty have the option of using the Test of Everyday Reasoning with Numeracy (TER-N) for Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning or may use faculty-developed rubrics. A general assessment of student learning is done by the college in several additional ways. These include surveys, standardized critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning tests and observation. Faculty receive results from these methods to improve the curriculum and courses annually. The College's Collective Bargaining Agreement outlines more regarding the faculty's role in assessment.

NMC provided good evidence of their attention to ensuring faculty are qualified to teach their classes. They follow standards outlined by the Higher Learning Commission, industry-specific requirements, and the *National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development*. *Job postings clearly articulate these requirements and then to college follows a process by which a candidate's credentials are verified and documented.*

The College has a documented process to ensure new faculty develop and grow in their discipline. A three-year provisional status helps ensure certain experiences are gained before a review to determine the removal of this status. This process is also addressed in the faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement.

NMC's faculty are regularly evaluated. The process begins with each faculty member establishing goals in multiple categories. These include Helping Students Learn, Professional Development, and Supporting College and Community Initiatives. Faculty must have at least six goals and include one from each category. One of the goals must represent a major project or endeavor. These goals are reviewed and approved by supervisors and then implemented by the faculty member.

The evaluation process includes faculty feedback from classroom observations, peer feedback, and student feedback. Information regarding this work is included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. For regular faculty, classroom observations are done once a year by the faculty supervisor or a designated peer observer. A standardized form is used. For provisional faculty, observations take place twice a year. Faculty address course observations in their annual review. A recently developed Co-Curricular team is dedicated to reviewing learning outside of the classroom, and the assessment of this learning.

Adjunct faculty reviews occur end of the fall semester (if not teaching in spring) or at the end of the spring semester for all other adjunct faculty. All courses use student evaluations. These student evaluations are discussed during their annual review with their supervisor.

To help ensure faculty are current in their disciplines and adept in teaching, faculty are required or encouraged to attend conferences. Provisional faculty are required to attend two conferences a year. They must attend a teaching-related conference and an industry-specific conference within their discipline area. Non-provisional faculty are also encouraged to attend teaching and industry conferences. However, no evidence was presented that this requirement was tracked and enforced.

Each year faculty develop goals that are approved by their supervisor. These may include professional development goals and other meaningful improvement opportunities. The College financially supports these efforts through financial allocations and support. In addition, the College's own Center for Instructional Excellence and Educational Media Technology department offers a wide variety of topics and opportunities open to faculty.

NMC faculty make themselves available to assist students. Faculty serve as academic advisors, participate in new student orientation, and hold a minimum of five hours of office hours which are posted and stated in the course syllabus.

Each year NMC reviews the number of support service positions during the planning and budgeting process to ensure adequate staffing is provided. If deficiencies are identified leaders explore re-allocating resources and/or initiate a position request. The College might benefit by benchmarking staff positions against national norms from professional organizations and/or peer institutions.

Staff does have the opportunity to participate in professional development activities in a variety of ways. Some funding is present to support these efforts.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Rating

Met

Rationale

The College provides a wide range of student support services. Listed examples include academic and career advising, childcare, disability services, health services, housing and dining, personal counseling, and tutoring. In addition, evidence was seen elsewhere that the college provides additional services and learning through the Student Government Association, Phi Theta Kappa, Library services, and more. Students also receive assistance from Academic Success Coaches that complement the support to students.

Multiple approaches by the institution are used to determine new students' math and English placement. Referral to and use of the Tutoring Center, Academic Success Coaching, Math and Science Center, and Writing and Reading Center assists students in overcoming learning challenges, setting goals, and developing college-level study skills. 24/7 online tutoring in most subjects is also available to students.

Academic Advising is provided to all students through a shared responsibility of professional advisors and faculty members. New students (first two semesters) are required to meet with an advisor and all other students are encouraged to work with these individuals. Additionally, students on academic probation are required to meet with advisors before registering.

Significant infrastructure changes and additions were instituted beginning in 2016. By realigning existing space and re-imaging needs, the College has better aligned itself to serve today's students. Specifically, the Dennis Museum, Nelson Innovation Center, re-designed classrooms, and the Student Success Center are now serving student needs well.

Off-campus learning has also been enhanced through additional clinical placement locations and the hiring of additional staff to support internship programs and career services for students.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Rationale

NMC programs are appropriate for Higher Education and fulfill the institutional mission through a variety of delivery methods and locations. The institution's commitment to students and identified general education and overall course learning outcomes provide evidence of the student learning at the College.

The institution is in the initial phase of increasing its commitment to human culture and diversity through classroom instruction, services, and actions on campus. Faculty professional development in this area has begun and as the College begins working on the new Strategic Plan in earnest, demonstrated practices and evidence should develop.

Faculty are available to students and are appropriately credentialed. Adequate professional faculty and staff professional development has accorded with practice and financial support demonstrated.

Tutoring, Student Success Coaches, and other evidence of convenient and supportive services exist. A commitment by both professional Academic Advisors and Faculty performing advising responsibilities further aids in the success of the students.

The College has demonstrated it provides quality education, and services to its students in a variety of ways and locations.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College's program reviews falls under the Vice President for Educational Services and the Director for Academic Affairs and data from program reviews are utilized for budgetary decisions and are available on through the dashboard on Office of Research and Planning Intranet Site. The review process includes the feedback from advisory groups and the use of surveys. Review of programs includes a cost analysis of each program, and the process is supported by the recently implemented 2022-2025 strategic plan. A stronger emphasis on academics and student outcomes as part of the review process and a clear role of faculty in the review process is needed. Clarity about what is done with the information garnered through the review process should be documented.

A transfer specialist in the Office of the Registrar oversees credit transfer, the curriculum committee,

department chairs or directors are responsible for reviewing applications for credit transfer from outside institutions to NMC. One way this is facilitated is through agreements with other institutions of higher education in Michigan through the Michigan Transfer Agreement, which stipulates that 30 credits of general education requirements from any of the institutions in the agreement are accepted. Northwestern Michigan College provides credit for prior learning experience through or from Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, American Council on Education, Dantes Subject Standardized Test. The College provides credit for experiential learning attained through a Competency Assessment, Certification Credits, and/or Course Waivers. The procedures and requirements for each of these options are listed on Northwestern Michigan College's website, under credit for prior learning. Options for experiential learning require an application approved and reviewed by a Department Chair or Director.

Northwestern Michigan College indicates that dual credit courses are comparable to courses taught on the campus. It does have standardized expectations for syllabi including course objectives, and new courses go through the curriculum committee, regardless of where or who they are offered. This expectation is supported by use of Curriculum Inventory Management system software and course expectations are set by faculty on the campus. The Faculty evaluate syllabi of courses taken by students at other institutions to determine their equivalency to NMC courses.

New programs are developed by faculty in respective program areas, the process is collaborate including the curriculum committee. Rigor is met through the curriculum committee and faculty review processes. Faculty credentials are addressed under criterion three.

The College has several programs with specialized accreditation including through Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, American Culinary Federation, the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation, the Bureau of Automotive Regulation, State of Michigan, and the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs to name a few. These are all listed on the College's website. A review of some of the accrediting bodies listed supports that they are all up to date.

Northwestern Michigan College uses several approaches to assess the success of its graduates, including surveys, monitoring pass rates for professional exams taken by graduates, assessment by faculty.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Rationale

There is clear evidence that Northwestern Michigan College is performing comprehensive assessment to measure student learning and educational outcomes. There are multiple groups involved with assessment across the campus, including the assessment coordinator, the assessment team, the curriculum committee, the center of instructional excellence, and the education service instructional management team. While these groups work together, it is unclear how information flows between each of these individuals and groups to perform the assessment, or how decisions are made with results from assessment. They have abundant assessment data, and the College utilizes a common rubric to assess the general education outcomes that is used by all instructors to ensure uniformity in the assessment of the general education courses. However, using the catalog to identify what the general education requirements are for particular programs was unclear. Northwestern Michigan College has newly developed co-curricular committee that assess these programs, so this committee needs time to develop its processes and start gathering data. The evidence provided does not demonstrate how the institution is utilizing the assessment data to improve student learning or the quality of programs or education outcomes.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

Northwestern Michigan College provided little evidence to support that it is performing assessment of student learning outcomes or co-curricular programs or what it does with results of the assessment. Assessment should demonstrate areas that need improvement and action should be taken to address such a result. Also, it is unclear how information flows between the assessment coordinator, the assessment team, the curriculum committee, the center of instructional excellence, and the education service instructional management team to make decisions or recommendations. Examples of where evidence is lacking include general education outcomes taking place every two years by the curriculum committee, examples students who participate in college-sanctioned service learning and global opportunities receiving documentation of these activities on college transcripts,

and examples of how other program sponsors use assessment tools and methods suited to the context of co-curricular programs. There was also no evidence of an assessment finding that led to a program improvement. An interim report should clearly articulate and demonstrate what the assessment process is at NMC (including the role of each committee in the process), how assessment is performed for both curricular and co-curricular programs and activities, and how NMC uses the results from its assessments to improve the quality of each of its programs.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Rating

Met

Rationale

NMC uses a variety of metrics to monitor completion, persistence, and retention goals established by the industry standards including the Perkins Core Indicators, National Community College Benchmark Project, Voluntary Framework of Accountability, Michigan School Data Success Rate metrics, and the Integrated Postsecondary Data System benchmarks. NMC uses these to assess how it is performing in relation to other institutions regionally and nationally. NMC collects and analyzes a variety of data related to student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs and then uses this information to inform improvements. These data include certificate and degree completion of at-risk students, advancement in developmental education coursework, transfer to a four-year institution, licensure/certification pass rates and placement rates of occupational certificate or degree completers.

To support data driven decisions regarding success metrics, the Office of Research, Planning, & Effectiveness (ORPE) provides consultation, evidence-based resources, and professional development training to individuals or department teams. Additionally, ORPE identifies evidence-based practices in data collection and analysis through active memberships in national and regional symposiums or conferences and professional organizations. ORPE shares relevant evidence-based practices and emerging trends from the Education Advisory Board in data collection and analysis with the College on the ORPE page, in departmental and area meetings and with the Leadership Council. In addition to using information to provide professional development to help faculty and staff make needed changes, the college also uses data to make program improvements. ORPE also conducts data collection through surveys for reporting to governmental, benchmarking, and community

stakeholders. NMC also conducts several internal surveys that serve as qualitative measures of student outcomes and progress. Qualitative measures complement the objective success metrics of the College and follow a survey process protocol that assists in determining research priorities.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College performs regular program reviews, evaluates all transcribed credit, has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer, ensures that the quality of dual credit courses are equivalent to those on the main campus, and has a robust number of programs with specialized accreditation that supports the quality of the programs being offered. NMC has well defined goals and collects data for student retention, persistence, and completion that are appropriate to its mission. NMC uses the information collected to improve in each of these areas. However, while the College provides an extensive list of initiatives for program and student learning outcome assessment, it provided little evidence to support that it actually does what it states. Furthermore, there is little evidence or narrative supporting what NMC does with data collected through assessment of academic programs and student learning outcomes. It is also not clear how the different committees that are involved in assessment communicate or make decisions concerning assessment outcomes or how to address issues identified through assessment. NMC has recently developed co-curricular assessment committee, so it will be beneficial to see what data the committee collects in the coming years, and what it does with this information.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) addressed its changes in executive leadership in a manner that maintained consistency and provided stability for the institution. The College collects feedback from internal and external constituent groups, including students and the Board of Trustees for transparent leadership. NMC provides an orientation experience for new board members that provides information about the College's policies, plans, goals, and operations as well as the Board's own regulations in terms of self-governance. The Board of Trustees meetings have a program focus that allows for a Faculty voice in matters of student success.

The cross-functional nature of the Leadership Council allows for employees across the College to stay current with student and operational success efforts. The official representation of Faculty, Staff and Student voices via their respective groups provides diverse perspectives and ideas for change. The Student Government Association engages with the community as well as employees to be sure that internal and external educational needs are met.

The Office of Institutional Research Planning and Effectiveness (ORPE) provides a Digital Dashboard for data-informed decision making. With an upgrade to Microsoft Power BI, ORPE is further developing its dashboards so that all employees can filter and export data in real-time, which will help NMC address success metrics and equity gaps in student learning. The Decision-Making Process for curriculum proposals offers a specific guide to help Faculty through the process.

Northwestern Michigan College allows for a variety of staff to offer guidance throughout this process, which helps to keep the focus on student learning. The Policy Council and the Planning and Budgeting Council have an inclusive structure that provides the voice of a student representative as well as employees from across the College.

Shared governance is mentioned in reference to the collection of input regarding academic policy, processes, and requirements. However, Northwestern Michigan College would benefit from a definition of shared governance created by Faculty, Staff, and Student leadership as well as Administrative leadership. This definition would then be a guide to gathering feedback on college issues or needs, deciding as to how to address those needs, sharing that decision and why it was selected, and implementing a plan. The practice of shared governance brings all internal constituents to the table when the college is aware of an issue or a need.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The hiring process of Northwestern Michigan College is thorough although the College may wish to revisit the concept of "organizational fit" as candidates seen as different can provide unique and innovative perspectives to the institution. Incorporating expanded hiring criteria will also assist diversity, equity and inclusion personnel efforts for the College. NMC's on-boarding efforts are focused on helping new employees recognize their value by learning how they can contribute to the College. Northwestern Michigan College allocates the funds needed to offer a robust professional development experience for Faculty and Staff. The partnership between the NMC's Professional Development Institute and the Center for Instructional Excellence brings employees from across the College to interact and learn from each other.

The document entitled Alignment of Planning Detailed Process Flow is intricate yet provides a fiscally and operationally sound pathway for the implementation of new programs and services. Planning and budgeting align with operational goals and organizational strategies while assessing potential impact and mitigating risks. Northwestern Michigan College follows its Resource Guidelines to ensure it has the funding necessary before plans are implemented. NMC's conservative budgeting and healthy reserves prepare the College to continue its operations in the case of state funding changes and unexpected infrastructure improvements while sustaining financial resources for program improvements and innovations.

To maintain fiscal stability, Northwestern Michigan College monitors the Primary Reserves Ratio, Composite Financial Index, and Net Operating Ratio as well as undergoing a third-party audit each year. NMC's Capital Outlay Allocation Team provides oversight of the general fund allocations, allowing the College to align capital purchases, such as technological infrastructure, with academic and service needs. A working Master Plan allows for comprehensive facilities assessments to predict and inform expenditures from the Physical Plant Major Maintenance and Future Buildings fund.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Rating

Met

Rationale

Facing property tax revenue growth limitations, Northwestern Michigan College minimizes an increase in tuition and fees by focusing on resource development planning in order to meet its mission and priorities. In response to the drop in enrollment due to the pandemic, NMC created an enrollment marketing plan to increase the percentage of local high school students who attend the College.

Other sources of revenue include grant-funded research, differential tuition, and an investment in the Northwestern Michigan College Foundation infrastructure to increase donations. As the result of a comprehensive campaign, the Foundation raised more than forty million dollars for scholarships, programs, and facilities.

Northwestern Michigan College's annual Program Reviews identify strengths and opportunities across the College to inform the institution's strategic plan for the continuous improvement of student learning and service success. The Innovation Center is an example of this work. NMC's continuous improvement cycle, entitled Plan, Do, Adjunct, and Check, developed with a third-party planning consultant company, is informed by data, as well as the voices of internal and external constituents plus national benchmarks and trends. The College's executive team considers the resulting improvement suggestions to ensure they align with Northwestern Michigan College's mission, vision, values, purposes, strategic directions, and institutional effectiveness criteria. The result is a draft Strategic Plan with monitored goals and metrics. NMC's Cost to Educate model illustrates current financial capacity and anticipates economic fluctuations. This allows the College to analyze numerous scenarios and produce a final fiscal year budget recommendation. The expansion of existing and the cultivation of new revenue-generating programs as well as differential tuition as

featured in NMC's program offerings (Portfolios A, B, and C) provides Northwestern Michigan College with economic flexibility and contribute to fiscal sustainability.

The College is addressing and mitigating a variety of factors that influence enrollment fluctuations through its Strategic Enrollment Plan to improve student recruitment, retention, success rates, and advocacy initiatives such as narrowing equity gaps. Initiatives were developed to help NMC reach its strategic goals as outlined in the Action Plan of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan: flexible instructional delivery, alternative credentialing, new learning technologies, success coaches, a Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Equity, and Inclusion, and growth of workforce development. Northwestern Michigan College tracks the goals of these objectives using key performance indicators and metrics, which are shared with internal and external stakeholders at monthly Board of Trustees meetings.

Improvements to the assessment of student learning outcomes result from the Assessment Team Co-Coordinator's meetings with Department Chairs and their partnership with the office of institutional research. However, data is collected with little evidence of 'closing the loop'. Stronger evidence of improvements as a result of assessment review and subsequent actions are needed. Areas for the improvement of teaching and learning are part of the faculty annual review. Improvement efforts are monitored on an annual basis to continuously address and mitigate student success challenges.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Rationale

While Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) has experienced significant leadership changes, it is dedicated to shared governance and maintenance of a collaborative relationship with the Board. The College administration's study sessions for Board updates as well as opportunities for Faculty and Staff to share their concerns with the Board can provide opportunities for a conducive partnership. NMC student voices are well represented via the Student Government Association.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning provides a number of informational sources for data-based decision making. The College's decision-making process is outlined thoroughly and with clarity. Northwestern Michigan College has the infrastructure and employees they need for student and organizational success as well as a dedication to employee success through the Professional Development Institute.

Actions taken by the Planning and Budget Council and their risk assessment process assist the College in maintaining a Working Capital Reserve Fund in alignment with their operational goals and Resource Guidelines. The Office of Finance and Administration monitors the NMC's Primary Reserves Ratio, Composite Financial Index, and Net Operating Ratio. The Capital Outlay Allocation Team provides oversight for the College's General Fund and works in tandem with the Planning and Budget Council. The Northwestern Michigan College Foundation is healthy, and the College's partnership with the state, focus on profitable programs and differential tuition produce additional sources of revenue.

The NMC's data-based program review cycle entitled "Plan, Do, Adjust, and Check" ensures that the College meets student, community, and organizational needs. The Cost to Educate model predicts the economic trends of the county and state to assist in the creation of sustainable budget recommendations. Northwestern Michigan College's investment in their Strategic Enrollment Plan as well as in state initiatives such as Michigan Reconnect and Future to Frontliners offer students and community pathways to upper socio-economic stability. The College's connection between student success metrics according to their Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning Student Learning Outcomes as well as their annual faculty reviews maintains a learning-centered organization.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met With Concerns
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

Review Summary

Interim Report(s) Required

Due Date

11/7/2025

Report Focus

Northwestern Michigan College provided little evidence to support that it is performing assessment of student learning outcomes, co-curricular programs or what it does with results of the assessment. Assessment should demonstrate areas that need improvement and action to be taken to address such a result. It is unclear how information flows between the assessment coordinator, the assessment team, the curriculum committee, the center of instructional excellence, and the education service instructional management team to make decisions or recommendations.

The interim monitoring report will clearly articulate and demonstrate what the assessment process is at NMC (including the role of each committee in the process), how assessment is performed for both curricular and co-curricular programs and activities, and how NMC uses the results from its assessments to improve the quality of each of its programs. Include in the report the following evidence.

1. Examples of evidence that general education outcomes are taking place every two years by the curriculum committee.
2. Examples of students who participate in college-sanctioned service learning and global opportunities receiving documentation of these activities on college transcripts.
3. Examples of how other program sponsors use assessment tools and methods suited to the context of co-curricular programs.
4. Evidence of assessment findings that led to academic and co-curricular program improvements.

Conclusion

Northwestern Michigan College is in the initial phase of increasing its commitment to human culture and diversity through classroom instruction, services, and actions on campus. Faculty professional development in this area has begun and as the College begins working on the new Strategic Plan in earnest, demonstrated practices and evidence should develop. The College has demonstrated it provides quality education, and services to its students in a variety of ways and locations. Support to students is demonstrated and they are serving the stated mission of the institution well.

While NMC has experienced leadership changes, it is dedicated to shared governance and maintenance of a collaborative relationship with the Board of Trustees, Staff, Faculty, and Students in terms of data-informed strategic planning and budgeting. The College would benefit from a definition of shared governance as a guide for the continuous improvement of all practices, procedures, and policies.

Northwestern Michigan College has defined goals and collects data for student retention, persistence, and completion that are appropriate to its mission, and uses the information collected to improve in each of these areas. However, while the College provides an extensive list of initiatives for program and student learning outcome

assessment, it provided little evidence to support action based on collected data. It is not clear how the various assessment committees communicate or make decisions concerning assessment outcomes or how to address issues identified through assessment. Processes and policies are on the website, but evidence that the actions are taking place are not presented. The minutes from meetings provide some evidence. However, it is not enough to post the policy. There needs to be proof that there is training, following policy, and assessment of policy taking place at the institution. NMC has recently developed a co-curricular assessment committee. It will be beneficial to see what data the committee collects in the coming years, and what it does with this information.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Not Applicable to This Review



Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

INSTITUTION and STATE: Northwestern Michigan College, Michigan

TYPE OF REVIEW: Open Pathway - Assurance Review

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:

DATES OF REVIEW: 10/03/2022

No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Control: Public

Recommended Change: no change

Degrees Awarded: Associates, Bachelors

Recommended Change: no change

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2018 - 2019

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2028 - 2029

Recommended Change: no change

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's, Bachelor's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Master's, Specialist, Doctoral

The institution is limited to offer the following program(s), within the approved program levels listed above: Bachelor of Science in Maritime Technology

Recommended Change: no change

Additional Locations:

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Prior HLC approval required.

Recommended Change: no change

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

Recommended Change: no change

Accreditation:

Accreditation Events

Accreditation Pathway: Open Pathway

Recommended Change:

Upcoming Events:

Comprehensive Evaluation Visit - 2028 - 2029

Federal Compliance Review - 2028 - 2029

Quality Initiative Report - 06/01/2028

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

Upcoming Event: Monitoring

Due November 7, 2025, an interim report to clearly articulate and demonstrate what the assessment process is at NMC (including the role of each committee in the process), how assessment is performed for both curricular and cocurricular programs and activities, and how NMC uses the results from its assessments to improve the quality of each of its programs. Report to include, among other items, evidence that assessment findings leading to academic and co-curricular program improvements.

Institutional Data

Educational Programs	Recommended Change: no change
Undergraduate	
Associate Degrees	38
Baccalaureate Degrees	4
Graduate	
Master's Degrees	0
Specialist Degrees	0
Doctoral Degrees	0
Certificates	36
 Extended Operations	
Active Branch Campuses	
(NONE)	
 Recommended Change: no change	

Active Additional Locations

UNITED STATES, 2600 Aero Park Drive, Traverse City, Michigan, 49686

Institutional Status and Requirements Worksheet

UNITED STATES, 715 East Front St., Traverse City, Michigan, 49686

Recommended Change: no change

Contractual Arrangements

(NONE)

Recommended Change: no change